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NEW LIGHT ON AN OLD ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN AND BOOKMAN: THE REVEREND THOMAS HALL, B.D., 1610-1665

BY

FREDERICK J. POWICKE, M.A., PH.D.

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NEW LIGHT ON AN OLD ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN AND BOOKMAN: THE REVEREND THOMAS HALL, B.D., 1610-1665.

By FREDERICK J. POWICKE, M.A., PH.D.

A MODERN visitor to the little semi-suburban town of King's Norton, six miles S.W. of Birmingham, will hardly credit the popular legend that letters were once addressed to Birmingham *near* King's Norton. But in the seventeenth century there seems to have been no great disparity between the two in point of population, and the King's North Town had at least the distinction of having been a royal manor from, or before, the date of Domesday Book (1086). It was the north town in respect of Bromsgrove, six miles south, to which parish it—as well as Wythall and Moseley—pertained.

Its church (St. Nicholas) was, therefore, but a chapel of ease to Bromsgrove, and remained so till 1846. Architecturally the church is famous for its spire whose beauty, with that of the tower, redeems the rest from comparative insignificance. Perhaps, however, the visitor will turn a more curious eye upon the queer patch-work of a building which stands at the N.E. of the church and is called King Edward's School—a building whose gabled second story suggests the remnant of a Tudor house, while the lower story in red brick is suggestive of a truncated cottage. The two parts are plainly not of the same date; and the former—it is said—was superadded to the latter—the original school—in order to accommodate the library of the Rev. Thomas Hall, master and minister during all the troubled years of the interregnum. It is with this remarkable man that we are here concerned. By his own request he was buried among the common people in the churchyard, but no trace of his grave has been found; and there is no reference to him in the Church Register except the entry of his burial. Yet as a schoolmaster and tutor he made the town known throughout the land; as a minister he held a position of influence in the midlands

second only to that of Baxter, and as a writer he won for himself a wide popularity—among Puritans at least. Would it be fair to say that the overflowing tide of reaction which lifted Charles II. and the Bishops to their "own" again, wiped out his name as it did that of many another Puritan? It became the fashion to make-believe that the like of him had never existed. At any rate, his one surviving memorial is a collection of books which bears his name in a special compartment of the Birmingham Public Free Library.

But it so happens that some interesting details about him and his Library have come to light in what purports to be an authentic biography. This somehow came into the hands of Richard Baxter, and has been lying unnoticed among the Baxter MSS. of the Williams's Library for more than 200 years. What was known of him to Calamy came—it would seem—for the most part from the Rev. Richard Moor, a minister ejected from Diss in Norfolk (1662), 20 miles south of Norwich, who was permitted to take charge of Wythall near King's Norton under the Indulgence of 1672, and there preached three sermons commemorative of Mr. Hall whom he had formerly known.[1] Two of these were preached in April, 1673, the third in April, 1674 (April being the month of his decease), and in the last he recites as much concerning Mr. Hall as he knew. This amounted to little beyond a meagre sketch of his career, an account of his death, and some personal impressions of his character. He says that he had been asked to do much more, and expresses regret that he could do so little. Then, incidentally, he adds the reason, viz. that Mr. Hall's "life written by himself was lost." This was in 1675 (the year of publication of the three sermons). By that time an autobiography known to Mr. Moor had disappeared. But I am inclined to believe that, in substance, the lost MS. has been found. For, though written in the third person, the Baxter MS. is so mixed up with autobiographical matter that it may well have had the said "Life" for a basis. It contains, e.g. Hall's will, lists of his books, and numerous remarks, all written as if by himself. At the same time, these, together with the

[1] Moor, after his ejection from Diss, retired to East Bergholt in Suffolk and was there in 1672 when he was licensed as a Presbyterian Teacher [Browne's *History of Congregationalism*, p. 324, note]. But in April, 1673, he had been at Wythall for "a year compleat," and speaks of being "restored to his ministry there," p. 42 (second of the three sermons).

narrative as a whole, have been worked over by an editor who calls himself the publisher[1]—Rev. John Reynolds, one of Mr. Hall's former pupils and late minister of Wolverhampton. After 1661—three or four years before Hall's death—Reynolds came to live on "his patrimony" at King's Norton and renewed former intercourse with his old friend. In this way, he may quite naturally have become the depositary of such notes of his life as Mr. Hall had written down—possibly with an understanding that Mr. Reynolds should use them as he thought fit. This, after Mr. Hall's death, he began to do and his design was to write a complete narrative. But something pulled him up midway—so that between 1646 and 1662 there is a gap, merely followed by a note or two about what befell Mr. Hall in 1662, reflections on the man and his work, a copy of his will, and rough catalogues of his libraries.

If it be asked how the MS. came into Baxter's hands, one may conjecture that it was lent to him by the writer, with whom he was in correspondence at least as late as 1680; and that, not having been returned before Reynolds's death in December, 1684, it passed out of sight and mind. It is possible that Baxter might have taken more care of the MS. if he had cared more for its subject. But there was no intimacy between him and Hall—rather otherwise. Hall, says Baxter, was the only Presbyterian known to him in the county. For that reason he refused to join the "Worcestershire Association"; and became a member, instead, of the Kenilworth Classis. Hall, in fact, alike in the strictness of his Presbyterian antagonism to Episcopacy and his rigid Calvinism, could not be a *persona grata* to Baxter—though respected by him as "a godly upright man" "of a quick spirit."[2] The proper title of the MS. is as follows:—

"A briefe narrative of the Life and Death of Mr. Thomas Hall, late Pastor of King's Norton in Worcestershire—full of comfort and encouragement for the weak and the tempted against those many discomforts and discouragements w^ch^ they must expect to meete w^th^all from their Spirituall enemies whilst they are in this Vale of Teares;

[1] W. H. Black (1808-1872), the cataloguer of the B. MSS., takes it as evident that the "Life" is Thomas Hall's own autograph; but this is impossible: for it would mean (*inter alia*) that Hall wrote his own post-mortem eulogy (pp. 84-114).

[2] R. B., iii., p. 93.

where the people of God may allso find many usefull Practicall Rules for their Direction in this their Pilgrimage condition. . . . published by John Reynolds, late minister of Wolverhampton and sometimes pupil to the aforesaid author."[1]

A second title in another hand runs—"A Brief account of the Life and Death of Tho. Hall (an enthusiast) Pastor and minister of King's Norton in Worcestershire with his will and a catalogue of his Books, etc."

The pith of the MS., for our purpose, may be distributed under four heads—(1) his career; (2) some special experiences; (3) his library or libraries; (4) his Presbyterian intolerance.

It will be seen later, under the third head, that the Catalogues throw what may be a surprising light on the "Thomas Hall Library" which (as already said) is one of the prized possessions of Birmingham.

I. His Career.

As to his career it will save repetition if we just mention what is said in the D.N.B.—an account based on Anthony à Wood (*Athenæ Oxon.*, vol. iii., coll. 677, 8, Blass's edition), with a touch or two from Calamy who, in turn, drew his information mostly from Moor.

His father, a clothier, was Richard Hall and his mother Elizabeth Bonner. He was born in St. Andrew's Parish, Worcester, about 22 July, 1610, and educated at first under Henry Bright (*d.* 1626) one of the most celebrated schoolmasters of his day. In 1624 he entered Balliol College, Oxford, and, finding himself under a careless tutor, soon removed to Pembroke College as a pupil of Thomas Lushington. Having graduated on 7 February, 1629, he returned to Worcestershire and became teacher of a private school, and preached in the chapels of several hamlets in the parish of King's Norton—of which his elder brother John, Vicar of Bromsgrove, was perpetual curate. Later, his brother resigned the curacy to him, and he was glad to eke out its small stipend by that of the mastership of the Grammar School. Yet, refusing far greater preferment, he stayed there till his death. At first a conformist he turned Presbyterian before 1640—partly through attending a Puritan Lecture at Birmingham. In 1652 he obtained his B.D. from the Puritan delegates at Oxford

[1] Note the word "author" as indicative of a MS. which the publisher is editing.

on the terms of preaching a Latin and English sermon. He was "a plain but fervent preacher"; and a lover of learning. He proved the latter by the books he contributed and collected for the Library of the Birmingham Grammar School; and, also, by the Library he founded at King's Norton. After his ejection in 1662 he was reduced to great poverty; but saved from actual want by his friends. He died on 13 April, 1665. John Hall (1652-1710), Bishop of Bristol (born and buried at Bromsgrove) was his nephew.[1]

Our MS. supplements and modifies in various particulars. Thus, it informs us that both his father and grandfather did "beare the chiefe offices of the citty w^th^ generall love and approbation"; while of his mother it is noted that her father was John Bonner, a London merchant in Queen Elizabeth's days, who sheltered and succoured silenced ministers; and, at his death, bequeathed a legacy for the buying of New Testaments to be disposed in the ignorant places about Worcester. She had five sons and four daughters. Three of the sons were allotted to the ministry; the other two died in the Parliament's service. John, the eldest son, died at Bromsgrove on 19 August, 1653, after an incumbency of thirty years. "Thomas was the middlemost son—tossed and tempted and tried from his youth up. At his first setting forth he fell into the hands of a butcherly schoolmaster [the aforesaid celebrated Henry Bright ?] who had killed some children, brought others to consumptions, and the falling sickness, and so wronged and affrighted this our friend (he being of a mild and fearfull nature) y^t^ he carried the scarres of this cruelty with him to his grave."[2]

In 1625[3] he entered at Balliol College, Oxford—under a Tutor "famous in his ministry for Philosophy and industry; but, having wasted his body and brain (w^th^ what I shall not say) he was grown so idle and sottish that every sophistry would baffle him. Not long after he died of a consumption. From Ballioll he removed to Pembroke Colledge (ab Herode ad Pilatum, as the Proverb says) to a Tutor that had a great fame for learning but a starke, staring Armenian.[4] His

[1] Rev. John Spilsbury, brother-in-law of the Bishop, and Baxter's friend, succeeded John Hall, the elder, as Vicar of Bromsgrove and was ejected in 1662. Baxter says he was "accounted an Independant," R.B., iii., p. 92.

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[3] Not 1624.

[4] Dr. Lushington now a Socinian—(margin).

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first Tutor starved him and this Poysoned him." He graduated B.A. on 1 May,[1] 1629, and in the same year came to King's Norton—where "he abode to the day of his death."

He came to be teacher not of a private school but of the Free Grammar School "wch he found in a low condition" and by "his industry" soon made famous, drawing students "from Worcester, London, Wales, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire, Northumberland, Leicestershire, Herefordshire, Ireland"—all which places are mentioned in this promiscuous order. It is added that, in the course of his tenure of the school, "he sent more to the University from 'it' than ever was sent . . . since 'twas a schole." "He stored the country round about wth pious, learned, able, orthodox ministers; and 'tis observed yt scarce one yt ever he bred to the ministry but was a blessing to the place where he came. . . . In his latter days he had divers Graduats in his house wch came from the University to be trained up by him in Divinity, so yt the family he lived in was a little academy; and when neighbour ministers were sick or at a loss, he supplied their wants.[2] He gained much by teaching others (*docendo disco*); and by imploying his masters Talent he improved it." Hall's "little academy" was surely the first of its kind in point of time.

It appears that he first began to preach, and then only after much persuasion, in 1632 when "he was called to Withall, a Chappell in King's Norton parish." Nothing is said of his experience here except that he was vainly pressed "by a malignant Churchwarden" to read from the Pulpit the King's Book of Sports and that he made trouble for himself with "a local usurer" by preaching against covetousness. But his chief vexation at this time came "from the unquietness of the female sex where he sojourned"—a reference, I take it, to a shrewish housekeeper. "He found yt of Solomon true, Proverbs 19. 13 ('the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping') and 21. 9, 19 ('It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop than with a contentious woman in a wide house'; 'It is better to dwell in a desert land than with a contentious and fretful woman')." He also found "some canonicall truth in yt Apocryphall Text, Ecclus. 25. 13, 16 ['Give me . . . any wickedness but the wickedness of a woman'; 'I will rather dwell with a lion and a dragon than keep house with a wicked

[1] Not 9 February. [2] i.e. By his students.

woman']." This made him often say—Felix cui uxor, felicior cui bona, felicissimus cui nulla.[1] Thus, his lot at home was a daily trial, but a trial in Patience which, like Socrates, he turned to good account. He had another heavy trial in a state of chronic ill-health, of which one symptom was inveterate sleeplessness. "He had scarce 20 quiet nights in 20 years." He laid the blame on Satan, especially because "his nights before the Sabbath and before a Fast" were his worst. He got no benefit from the use of "physical meanes" i.e. medicines. "The best Physick that ever he found was Prayer and Labor."

In 1635, Mosely, another Chapel in the parish of King's Norton was joined to his charge of Withall. "This was the place which of all places in the world he loved most." Why, we are not told; but partly no doubt because here he found a staunch friend in Sir Richard Greaves, "the minister's patron, the poore man's shield, the good man's Tower and the wicked man's Terror."

At length, in 1640, he was called to the Parish church of King's Norton in succession—it is said—to "many Sir Johns" who bequeathed him "a rude and ignorant people—Drunkards, Papists, Atheists, Sabbath-profaners, etc." But "the juncture of time"—just when the long Parliament began to sit (Nov., 1640)—was favourable to Reformation; and "in a short time" he had them "civilized" and, "in the general, Tractable and Teachable." One of his first acts was to set up a Lecture at Henley where there "lived a dumb-dog" whom Hall's intrusion roused into "a barking, bawling curre." At the same place, some time later, "he was set upon by Sectaries and challenged to that discussion w^ch^ brought forth his first book the 'Pulpit Guarded.'" For the rest, his ministry at King's Norton seems to have been free from internal troubles. He held on there with steady devotion till his ejectment in 1662—never once missing "a Sabbath or Fast Day save when he was in Prison, so y^t^ he was a good succour to the Parishes round about whose ministers were fled." "He had the best and chiefest people of most congregations round about . . . y^t^ did depend upon his ministry. Yea, some came 20 miles affirming y^t^ they had not any consciencious Preaching nearer."

Then "at last y^t^ fatal act came forth w^ch^ cast him (w^th^ hundreds more) out of all; and now he spent the most of his Sabbaths in private

[1] So margin. This is a strange remark about a housekeeper but it can only refer to her; as he was certainly not married.

fasting and mourning for the loss of the holy fellowship: for in publike he could get nothing, the devotion of the time being like to a three-halfe-penny ordinary, where a man must swim̄e thro a great mass of brothe before he can come at a little chip of meat, and y^{t} many times mixt wth poysson."

He died at King's Norton on April 13, 1665—it is said "in great poverty," and no doubt this was true. But Calamy tells us that when "in his last sickness his stock was reduced to sixpence . . . he was easie and said it was enough, and it proved so, with Providential Additions. For before 'twas gone, several sealed Papers of money were sent him by unknown Friends to supply his occasions."

His "last Will and Testament," dated April 20, 1664, is a characteristic document. Here are the first two clauses—

(1) "I give thanks to God that he hath made me a man and not a woman, and y^{t} he hath made me a Christian and not a Barbarian and y^{t} he hath made me a minister amongst Christians and of his own free Grace hath made me a Leader of his people—(me) who hath long since deserved to be cast out of his Presence as a dead-dog fitter for the ditch of hell than to serve in his temple, and to be trod upon as unsavoury salt long since. . . ."

(2) "I bless his name y^{t} he was pleased to call me to the knowledge of his truth at 19 yeares of age, whereby I have beene enabled to do him the more service, and to see more abundantly of the travaile of my soul."

In clause (3) he blesses God for having counted him worthy to suffer for his truth and testifies that he dies in the faith which he has preached and published to others. Clause 4 runs:—

"I see the vanity and disorder y^{t} is at pompous burialls, and, therefore, I have given speciall charge y^{t} it be totally forbidden as to me. . . ."

Clauses 5, 6, and 7 are a dying charge to his flock, the 6th begging them not to "let idolaters (i.e. Papists) rise in judgment against" them.

For "they can part wth forty shillings a yeer out of 20£ per annū to their masse Prieste, w^{n} you grumble to part wth the fourth part of y^{t} sum̄e to the faithfull ministers of Christ."

The last clause refers to his Library and will be dealt with later.

He ends with a prayer for the "church all over the world" and signs himself "thy dying Friend, TH. HALL."

II. SOME EXPERIENCES.

The D.N.B. article, quoting Calamy, says that in the time of the civil war he was "many times plundered, and five times imprison'd." But according to our MS. this is an exaggeration of the facts. His first taste of the war was on October 17, 1642, when "Prince Rupert w^th^ his followers quartered in King's Norton before he went to Edgehill. But the Lord preserved him and all that he had for y^t^ time." A few months later he was not so fortunate: for on "March 2, 164$\frac{2}{3}$, (the very day the Lord Brooke was killed at Lichfield) he was plundered of all he had . . . they left him nothing but his bookes; and, not long after they came for them and tooke bag-fulls away." "He told them he could now say with the Philosopher, *omnia mea mecum porto.*"[1] "He asked them why they plundered him thus, since he had done thē no wrong. They answered him, because he was an enemy to the King. He told thē y^t^ he prayed for the King, he preach^t^ for the King, and blamed those who gave not to Cæsar w^t^ was Cæsar's, and he was ready to sacrifice for him in an Honorable and Just way; and, if this were to be an enemy to Cæsar he wisht he might have many such enemies. The cavaliers replied y^t^ if he were so good a friend to the King then he must show his loyalty by Drinking a Health to the King—w^ch^ one Captaine Blunt, a Papist, began. To this he answered, y^t^ he desired to be excused, for he had Preacht against such practices, and 'twas his desire alwayes to practise himselfe w^t^ he taught to others. They replied y^t^ if they should begin a Health to the Parliament, then he would pledge thē. He answered y^t^ if they should begin a thousand healths to the Parliament he would not pledge thē. *He would, indeed, pray for their Health; but he would drinke no more than might preserve his owne.* This answer pleased thē, and so he escaped y^t^ snare." On July 4, "The queene came from Burton-on-Trent and quartered at King's-Norton w^th^ about 6000 men." "The commanders—Colonel Dewey, Major Dewey, Captain Dancy, Captain Metcalfe, Captain Atkinson and Captain Beverley, Yorkshiremen—quartered in the house with him" and "(to

[1] Marginal note.

give them their due) they were sober, orderly, ingenuous men and preserved the family from violence." Moreover when "in the middle of supper," the King's health was proposed as usual and was evaded as usual by Mr. Hall "the moderate Cavaliers" were strong enough to restrain the rest from forcing him. So far, therefore, he had nothing much to complain of; nor did he suffer more than a brief inconvenience when on "October 17 he was taken Prisoner to Birmingham." For "by the mediation of friends he was soon set free." This was his first imprisonment. The second befell him on February 14, 164$\frac{3}{4}$, when "he was carried Prisoner to Worcester and kept there a fortnight." With no thanks to the Cavaliers, "who thought to do him an injury," it turned out to be a pleasant holiday. For Worcester was his birthplace; and he found himself among old friends. The very house of detention was the house of a friend; so that "'twas to him a Pallas rather than a Prison and as the martyr dated his letters from the delectable hortiard[1] of the Leonine prison, "so he dated his fōr his delectable Pallas at Worcester in the sun" (the signe of the House where he was prisoner).[2]

Once, during the fortnight, he heard a sermon by Mr. Whitby, the Governor's chaplain, "an able man but full of gall against the Parliament." His text—Judges v. 23, "curse ye Meroz" . . .—was more often in use among the Roundheads but had as much (or as little) fitness on the one side as on the other. "At last came ἓν μέγα, the Grand Snare," viz. the Oath requiring him to "sware y^{t} the Earle of Essex and all his adherents were traitors and y^{t} he would oppose thē." He refused on the ground that "'twas against the Petition of Right" and that the King's authority to "make" the Oath (which was pleaded) did not avail. "No sole Act of the King wthout consent of Parliament is obligatory to the subjects of England." Under other circumstances, his firm refusal and plain speaking might have cost him dear; "but the Lord broke this snare also, and being a man y^{t} was known to have no money, by the mediation of friends he was again set free." There ensued, throughout the rest of 1644, "a little Breathing fit" with "little or no loss and trouble." The only

[1] Hortyard, an affected alteration of orchard, frequent in the 16th and 17th centuries. Influenced by the Latin *hortus*—Oxford Dictionary, *sub voce*.
[2] Margin.

rough bit in its even course came on October 23, when "he was taken Prisoner by Dudley-men ; but they, having no power to meddle in Worcestershire, released him."

But the year was not without its incidents. Thus on April 28, "at midnight, one col. Guy Moldsworth, came w^th^ his ragged Regiment and plundred King's Norton (w^ch^ had escaped till now) seven times over. He drove the comons, tooke away all the sheepe, and eat the(m) w^ch^ he could get. He allso tooke a net full of Froggs—I meane 22 Prisoners out of the Towne (most of the Poore people), the rich were fled, some of them were Cavaliers. This helpt to convert the. Mr. Hall had notice of their coming, and thereupon by p(er)-swasions lay fro home y^t^ night (tho he had not layen a night fro home of a yeere and a halfe before) and so escaped the." Again, on Saturday, January 4, 1644, "he was found allmost dead in his study" as the effect of fumes from "a pan of charcoales" which in the close room overcame him. He was saved by the accidental "coming" of some neighbours who let in the "aire." "Another time he was nigh to death w^th^ drinking a little cold beere after the evening sermon. He had lost his speech w^th^ the extremity of paine in his stomach ; yet, having some burnt sack, w^th^ ginger in it, made ready w^th^ all speed, it overcame the coldness of the beere and recovered him imediately."

1645 is noted as *mirabilis annus*—when the new model army or the new noddle, as it was called by scornful cavaliers, so "noddled and modelled" those gentlemen "that they never prevailed after." But before this could come to pass "the King w^th^ his whole army" laid siege to Hawkston, "an old moated Popish House" in the Parish which at that time was held by a small garrison of Roundheads under Captain Gouge. Though the enemy drained off a great part of the moat and was in overwhelming strength it took them four days to gain, "w^le^ many strong castles have been gained in four hours." The writer truly remarks that "it was of good consequence (at y^t^ juncture of time especially) : for by y^t^ meanes the Parliament's army had time to compleat themselves against Naseby-battle." He goes on to say that "during the siege these Parts were sorely harrast, all their meate and drinke was gone, they had nothing but Adams ale (pure water) left them." Further, it was the cavaliers who stayed to welcome their friends that fared worst—"if they had any money." For then "they were tyed neck and heeles together till they ransomed them-

selves, so y^t at last they were forced to out-run their houses, and to lye in Hedges and Ditches with the Roundheads." "And"—he adds—"'tis observed throughout the land y^t the cavaliers' greatest friends had the greatest losses, and those w^{ch} were most for thē sped worst by thē."

Worcestershire, owing to geographical position, was still for a time overrun by Royalist bands even after Naseby, and so it happened that about the "time Bristol was taken by the Parliament forces" Mr. Hall "was taken prisoner frō church whilst he was keeping a Fast" (September 20th) "and carried to Hartlebury Castle where he lay almost nine weekes." This was his last and longest and severest experience of the kind. "Here he lay at first upon the boardes; and, as Jacob never slept more soundly than w^n he had a stone for his Pillow, so he slept best w^n he had the boards for his bed. However, the Lord brought him in his due time and establisht his liberty ever after. . . ."

If the foregoing—drawn from a contemporary source—be correct, he endured not five but only four imprisonments and none very severe, nor is it quite fair to say that "he was often accused, threatened with Death, many times plundered." In view of his uncompromising stand and character, it is, on the whole, creditable to the Cavaliers that they treated him so leniently.

III. His Libraries.

Mr. Hall's chronic poverty seems to have "abounded unto the riches of" his "liberality": for "his doors and ears were open to the Poorest; and the meanest Inhabitant of his Parish should as soon have his request granted, if in his Power, as the greatest."[1] Nor did it prevent him from buying books. Indeed, what he spent upon books must have run into hundreds of pounds, and makes the suggestion irresistible that he must have starved himself of all other comforts in order to get them.

Moreover, he bought for delight as well as for use. He was a bibliophile as well as a student. Things curious and rare in the way of binding or origin or content appealed to him—though theology, of course, was his main concern. And his marginal notes, which are numerous, give full proof that he read with a relish.

On August 26, 1662, he was seized with "a Quartan Ague"; and "The Parishioners"—says the MS.—"supposing that this might

[1] Calamy.

be his last sickness, and understanding y' he intended to bestow £200 worth of Books for the good of the Parish, they undertooke to build a library to put them in." But he recovered and their zeal abated; so that "if he had not put to his helping hand, and w^th^all improved his interest in all his friends in all probability the matter had never been accomplisht, which now is completed and is become as fine a monument for Church and Schoole as any in the county for its bignes." This was written after his death in 1665, and shows in what sense we are to take Calamy's statement that he "prevailed with his Parish to build a publick Library" to which "he gave his own Study" "in his life-time." He had not actually given the Library in 1662, nor had he done so when he made his will in April, 1664: for there it is said, "as for my Riches 'tis quickly cast. I have nothing to bequeath but a few bookes; and the best of them I give to the Library at Birmingham as a monument of my best respects to y^t^ Towne and the ministers there, w^th^ the rest of the adjacent ministers. The Rest, being ordinary bookes and not so fit for so publick a Library." A few pages later we come to this: "Books given for a Library at Kingsnorton for the use of the Minister of

{ Kingsnorton
Mosely and
Withall, etc.

and of the two Schoolmasters there; desiring every one of thē in general and each of thē in particular to Augment w^n^ they can but not in the least to diminish the number of the Books which I have designed for the general good of thē and of their successors after ēm." The total number of books is stated as 220, thirty for the Schoolmaster's "Study" and one hundred and ninety for the Library.

This follows "a Catalogue of those books w^ch^ are given to the Library at Birmingham, 1667"—to the number of 150; and then an invocatory or imprecatory prayer: "The good Lord increase those y^t^ shall increase these Librarys and destroy those y^t^ shall go about to destroy ēm!"

When we compare the two lists it is rather difficult to see in what respects the village Library consists of "more ordinary books" than those designed for the public Library. But perhaps the distinction may be traced in the fact that while both are mostly theological there is a predominance of "practical divinity" in the one, and of Dictionaries,

commentaries, Greek, Latin or Hebrew books, and works of controversy in the other. There are in the village Library about a dozen of Baxter's "practical" writings and none in the Public.

The chief interest, however, of the two lists is this—that they make it possible to discover just what volumes in the present Thomas Hall Library at Birmingham actually belonged to the Library as bequeathed by the founder. It appears that the books set apart for Birmingham in 1667 did not go there but remained at King's Norton, and (not at once possibly but in the course of time) got mixed up with the others. Not till two hundred and twenty-five years had passed—i.e. in 1892—did the transfer take place, and then it was of the whole Parish Library comprising "above 600 volumes." The account of these by Mr. Salt Brassington, F.S.A., is as follows:—

"The books are chiefly upon theological subjects, but these represent a wide range of thought, and include many rare foreign treatises, besides English works and numerous sermons by 'Preachers of God's word' all over England. The political tracts are numerous and include rare quartos upon 'Ship Money,' 'The Trial of Lord Strafford,' 'The Wallingford House Committee,' 'Ordinances of Lord Essex's Army,' etc. etc. The Presbyterian literature is valuable as showing the tendency of the theological thought of the times, and the tenets of the dominant party under Cromwell.

"There are a few American tracts and one book of plays—Lord Stirling's. There are some excellent specimens of early typography, particularly the beautiful but incomplete volume of St. Augustine; a book printed by Guyot Marchant, at Paris, 1498, Ovid's 'De Remedio Amoris,' M. Le Noir, Paris, 1495; a copy of the curious German Encyclopædia of Arts and Sciences, 'Marguerita Philosophica,' containing early wood engravings; and lastly, the valuable fragment of an early Oxford printed book, by John Scolar, 'Qæstiones moralissime,' etc., printed in 1518, and containing two woodcuts, one of the Royal Arms of England, and the other of the Arms of the University of Oxford; only two other copies of this book are known. Several volumes still retain their original stamped leather bindings; one bears the mark of John Reynes, bookbinder to Henry VIII. whose arms and badges are stamped upon one side, while the other is adorned with that most singular of all devices, 'The arms of the Saviour of the World.' There is also a fragment of a binding bearing the initials of

a fifteenth-century stationer of the city of York. Several volumes are bound in vellum leaves, taken from ancient manuscripts, one, apparently from a Service Book, exhibits portions of a chant. The fly-leaves of a copy of Laurentius Valla's 'Adeps' are fragments of the 'Bartholomæus de Proprietatibus Rerum' printed by Wynken de Worde. The binding is of stamped leather by 'G. R.'; on one side are the Arms of Henry VIII., on the other the figures of four saints. Among the more curious books may be mentioned 'The Anatomie of Abuses' by Philip Stubs, 4th edition, 1595; 'the most Heavenly and Christian speech of the Magnanimous and Valorius King of Sweden, Carolus Gustavus Adolphus, on his death-bed,' London, 1660; 'Vox Piscis or the Book-Fish, containing Three Treatises, which were found in the belly of a cod-fish in Cambridge Market, on midsummer eve last A.D. 1626' by Richard Tracie, London, 1627."

Now what strikes one in reading this, and then in reading the two lists, is that in these there would appear to be little or no mention of the rare or curious items, etc., referred to by Mr. Brassington. It becomes a question, indeed, how far the present "Hall" collection corresponds at all with the original bequest; and it is in order to clear up this point that the 1667 list has been appended to the present article.

With regard to the local library the donor might be expected to leave directions such as he would not think of prescribing or even suggesting to the experienced custodians of a public institution. And he did so in distracting fashion. For first one direction is scribbled and scored out, then a second, then a third and so on. Evidently he was in a state of anxiety about the future of his books and had no great faith in the carefulness or even the honesty of their users. But in the end he seems to have left it at this—that the schoolmaster should make and keep a Catalogue; that the minister of Mosely, and one Church Warden and one parishioner should call over the Catalogue every Easter Tuesday; that if any books were missing the minister and schoolmaster of King's Norton should find out the defaulters; that these, if need be, shall be forced by "law to make satisfaction"; that the same two, under "a bond of £140 or more," shall hold themselves responsible[1] for the safe preservation of the Library as a whole, that

[1] To the minister of Mosely and one Church Warden of King's Norton.

everyone admitted to the use of the Library shall "engage on the faith of a Christian" not to "embezzle or abuse" a book; and that "no schollars y^t^ are boys" are "to be admitted to the use of the books but in the presence of the M^r^, etc."

We may add, on the authority of Mr. Brassington, that the books were stored in specially constructed oak cupboards and that the cupboards formed part of the furniture of the upper room of an ancient building standing at the north-east angle of the churchyard. This building appears to be of fourteenth-century construction, and was underbuilt with brick and stone apparently in the Tudor period.[1] In all probability it was a priest's chamber used by the clergy of the chantry in the adjoining church, both as a dwelling and a school.

According to the same writer the cupboards were "the gift of the parishioners"; but, as shown above, not theirs alone.

IV. His Presbyterian Intolerance.

We are assured by his biographer that Mr. Hall "as he loved Christ so he loved the servants of Christ sincerely . . . and . . . prized grace wherever he saw it." But he could see no grace, e.g. in the Church of Rome or any of its adherents. A note of his on the title-page of one of his books (1641) runs: "Those w^m^ God hates the world loves and those w^m^ the world loves God hates. The Queen of Sweden turned Papist and is blest and prdoned by Pope and Priests; but blasted and abhorred of God as a gross idolator now in a time of light." This expresses his life-long feeling. Similar outbursts, even more implacable in tone, are of frequent occurrence. One of the latest seems to show that with Papal Rome he couples Episcopal England, viz.: "From the Pope's broth and the Devil's loufe (i.e. loaf)—a coarse reference to the Mass—good Lord deliver us." Also, "from y^t^ w^ch^ is the blind-church-man's spectacles, the lame-church-man's crutches, the lazy-church-man's Pillow, the comon-peoples' Idol, the Profane-man's Delilah, libera nos, etc."—meaning the Prayer book. We are not surprised, therefore, to find him blessing the name of Thomas Edwards (d. 1646), "hereticorum veré malleus," compiler of the famous "Gangræna": "He (Hall) hated all by-paths, new-

[1] This is not the view of the Rev. T. M. C. Aston, M.A., in a lecture —"King's Norton in the Olden Time"—which he delivered, as Vicar, on 20 Nov., 1866. Mr. Aston's view is the one I have adopted.

lights and the new-found ways of the times, he kept close to the patterns of wholesome words w^th^out turning to the right hand or the left." So the Cromwellian laxity which encouraged Sectaries was a sore trouble to him. He denounced them—" Arrians, Arminians, Socinians, Antinomians, Anabaptists, Moralists, Seekers, Ranters, Quakers," etc.—from the pulpit ; wrestled with them in public debate—particularly with Jane Higgs, a Quakeress ; and advanced against them in book after book. Indeed, those " Births of his brain and study " were nearly all occasioned (says his biographer) by one or another of the " pestiferous " heresies which swarmed around him. It will serve to illustrate the extremes to which good men of his (Presbyterian) type—for he *was* a good man—could let themselves be driven by a fanatical orthodoxy, if we glance at the story of his controversy with one Thomas Collier—a man of excellent character who presumed to preach without ordination and to expound opinions akin on some points to those of the Quakers. On account of these he was expelled from Guernsey and then itinerated in the West of England where—says " Gangræna " Edwards—he was " the first who sowed the seeds of Anabaptism, Anti-Sabbatarianism and some Arminianism." In 1645 he published " Certain Queries " in which (says Edwards),[1] " he makes baptizing the children of the faithful not only to be in vain but evil and sinful." So he became, it appears, " a Master Sectary and a great Power amongst them." After suffering imprisonment at Portsmouth he travelled in other parts of the land and for a time was Teacher of a Church at York ; then he settled as a Baptist minister at Luppett and Upottery. In 1682 he is found at Westbury, Somerset, where he died at a date unknown. Now in 1651 he published an octavo pamphlet of 164 pages entitled :—

" The pulpit-guard routed in its Strongholds, or, a brief answer to a large and lawless discourse written by one Thomas Hall of Kings Norton entitled, ' the Pulpit guarded ' with twenty arguments pretending to prove the unlawfulness and sinfulness of private men's preaching. Wherein the Arguments, being weighed in the Balance of the Sanctuary, are found too light ; and the lawfulness of private men's preaching (as Thomas Hall calls them), viz. gifted Brethren, is cleared and confirmed in opposition to all gainsayers. My work in

[1] There is a good deal about Collier in the " Gangræna," Pt. iii. pp. 27-29, 41, 51, 52.

this treatise hath been, and is, (1) to rout him in all his guards, and (2) to discover the weakness and invalidity of all his answers to those objections and allegations by him there produced for the preaching of gifted brethren. His six arguments to prove their ministry " (the Presbyterian) " free from Anti-Christianism, rased ; and six more asserted, proving them to be Anti-Christian."

This in due course reached Mr. Hall and drew forth an answer under the amiable title :—

" The collier in his colours—or—*The Picture of a Collier.* Where you have the filthy, false, Heretical, Blasphemous tenets of one COLLIER, an *Arrian*, *Arminian*, *Socinian*, *Samosatenian*, *Antinomian*, *Anabaptist*, *Familist*, *Donatist*, *Separatist*, *Anti-Scripturist*, etc. An open Enemy to God, to Christ, to Scripture, Law, Gospel, Church, Commonwealth, Magistracy, Ministry, Army, etc., *as will fully and plainly appear by the ensuing Discourse* "[1] (1652). Here are the opening sentences :—

" You are a stranger to me, and live at a distance from me : sometimes I hear of you in the North " (*omne malum ab Aquilone*—in margin), " and anon you are in the West, so that I know not whether you are black or white ; only I perceive your Name is *Collier*, and you have not your Name for nought : for as *Abigail* said of *Nabal*, *Nabal is his name and folly is with him ;* so *Collier* is your name and collying is with you : you colly the Trinity, colly the Scriptures, colly the Law, colly the Gospel, colly Magistracy, colly Ministry, colly Church, colly State, colly Army, colly old, colly young, colly infants, colly all, etc."

Presently we come to this : ". . . You call yourself a Teacher, and that not of some obscure village but to the church at *York.*

[1] The author's name is not on the title-page ; but he was certainly Hall. It appeared first as an Appendix to " The Font Guarded by xx. arguments . . . " ; then separately with " *Præcursor Præcursoris*—or, a Word to Mr. Tombs, *currente calamo* " at the end. In the foreword Collier is spoken of as " sometimes a Husbandman and a Teacher to the Church at York, now of Westbury." Below the title we have references to Job 17. 7 ; 31. 35-36, Jude 9, and this :—

contra Rationem nema Sobrius
contra Scripturam nemo Christianus
contra Ecclesiam nemo Pacificus
} carbonarius solus contra omnia

His niger est ; Nunc tu, Britanne, cavcto.

What ! a Teacher, and a Lyar ? A Teacher, and a Blasphemer ? a Teacher, and a Railer ? a Teacher, and an Heretick, overthrowing the very foundations of Religion, etc. ? I think I may without any breach of charity, say that Hell is full of such Teachers. Wo to the people that have such a Pastor ! Wo to the Sheep that have such a Shepherd ! When the blind lead the blind, when the blind *collier* leads the blind Cripple, both fall into the ditch of Hell." He proceeds to "prove" his case by citations from what he calls Collier's "own twopenny Book (stuffed full with absurdities and blasphemies which yet most audaciously he dares to dedicate to the *Parliament* itself)"—viz. his *Discourse at Axbridge;* and then from the book under notice. From the two together, he thinks more than enough can be culled to justify the assertion that "if there be ever a false and foul-mouth'd Prophet in *England*, COLLIER is one, who is both *Mordax* and *Mendax*." As to the latter especially, "should we march on, we should find his Book as full of lyes as lines, as full of Errors as the Sea of monsters, an old rotten Dunghil of Loathsom Vermin, or a nasty Beggar of Lice." Poor Collier's unlucky charge, or insinuation against Hall of Ignorance in some points, is made to recoil on his own head in brutal style. "'Tis well known that he is a pure, or rather impure *Englishman*, a Sir *John Lack-Latine*, a *Purum nihil*, an empty nothing, who, though he want his Latine, yet he wants not a Lying tongue; and if he have no better skill in plowing than he hath in Preaching, he will make many foul balks." Finally, he is knocked down by a crashing blow of the *petitio principii* cudgel, thus :—

"To conclude, for I am tyred of raking in this Dung-hill, *Collier* himself shall confute all *Collier's* book : for in the last page he tells us that only those brethren which have gifts—not imaginary but Real —may Preach, or exercise them in an orderly Way. What need we any more ? For if none may Preach but such as have Real Gifts, and that in an orderly way, which the Scripture shows to be Election, Probation, Ordination, then our Gifted Brethren who have (for the most part) but imaginary Gifts, and those exercised in a disorderly way, without Election, Probation or any Ordination, by C's own confession ought to be supprest and silenced, to which all good men assent." If this had been all, if this priestly Presbyter had drawn the line at strong language, he might have been excused on the ground

that he did but follow a deplorable fashion of the age. But he went much farther. He wrote with a purpose and his purpose was to get Collier put to death. After a list of his alleged "horrid and hellish blasphemies" he says, "if this be not enough to burn his books . . . yea, and to burn the Person too . . . I must confess I know nothing in the Scriptures: for 'tis clearly set down in the Word—

> (1) that all blasphemous Hereticks should die the death, Lev. 24. 6 . . .; and (2) that seducing Hereticks ought to be put to death, Deut. 13. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 . . .

Now this *Collier* is both a blasphemous, and a seducing Heretick, sometimes sowing the Devil's seed in the North, and anon in the West. *Ergo*, etc." So his last word is an appeal to Parliament to take vengeance on such evil-doers.[1] We may note how widely he differed in this respect from Baxter who abhorred Blasphemers and Seducers and intrusive lay preachers no less perhaps than Hall, and urged the magistrate to restrain them if need be by imprisonment; but always disclaimed the least desire to have their punishment carried to the point of death, or made in any degree merely vindictive. He declared that not even on the worst of Papists, so long as his Popery did not lead to civil crime, would he have the capital penalty inflicted. But Hall was a strict Presbyterian, of the Samuel Rutherford school, prepared to go all lengths in defence of God's honour or glory. "If such as kill but a man must die the death, shall such as go about to destroy the ever-living and glorious God be suffered to live in a land?" That, in Hall's words, was the fatal logic.

[1] It is in view of such men as Hall—mostly Presbyterians, and kind enough in a general way, but panoplied with old Testament texts and examples against the least touch of pity for supposed heretics—that we can understand how their representatives in Parliament were encouraged to pass, e.g., the terrific Ordinance of 2 May, 1648, which described blasphemy under sixteen heads, and required the impenitent blasphemer to be killed off as a felon!

A Catalogue of those Books which are given to the Library at Birminghā.[1] 1667.

A.

Abbat, on
- Jonah.
- De Potestate regia.
- De p(er)sev(er)antia contra Thomyson.
- His Antilogia.
- Against Hill.
- Against Spence.
- Defence of Perkins.

Adams de vitis Theologorū.
A Lapide in 11 vol. folio.
S. Ambrose
- Op(er)a o(mn)ia.
- In Apocalypse.

Alsted's Cas. Consc. 4to.
Ainsworth Coment. folio.
Aquinas Summa.
Articuli Lambethani cū aliis.
Aretius
- Problems.
- Coment. in N.T. 2 vol. folio.

Aristotle's
- Works in 4 vol.—4to.
- His Rhetorick with Goulston's notes.
- His Physicks cū coment.

Arminius Op(er)a omnia.
Arnoldus Contra Socinū.
St. Austin
- in Psalmos.
- Loci com.
- in Genes., Exod., etc.

B.

Baldwin's Coment. on All the Epistles, 2 vol. folio.
His cases of consci. 4to.
Basilii Op(er)a omnia.
Beza In N.T. cū Camerario. folio.
Op(er)a omnia. 2 folios.
S. Bernard Op(er)a omnia.
M. Bernard
- for Sabbath.
- for Almes.

D. Benefield de p(er)sev(er)antia.
Bellarmine
- 3 vol. folio.
- His life and death.

Bible. Tindal.
Biblia Polyglotta in 6 volumnes.
Blake cū aliis contra Tombs.
Bloudy Tenent.
Brightman on Revelation—Latin.
Brewoods Enquirys.
Henry Burton against Arminians.
Bullinger in
- Daniel.
- Apocalyps.
- contra episcopos.

Borsman cum aliis in Ovid Met.
Bucoltzers Chronology.
Buxtorfi Synagoga Judaica.

C.

Calvin Op(er)a omnia in 12 volumnes.
Camero Op(er)a omnia—folio.
Camden Brittania. Latin.
Carthusiar in 4th Evangel.
Causin de Eloquentia.
Cartwright's Harmony. Edit. opt. 1647.
Cook's Institutes. 2 Part.
Catalogus Librorū Bibliothecæ Bodlianæ.
Cassander for Conformity.
Cassiodorus Op(er)a omnia.
Carpenter's Geography.
Caranza de Concilis.
Censura Remonstrant. Profess. Leydens.
Cœur Censura Patrum.
B. Carlton against Montague.
Chandux Loci com. de Scripturis.
Clemanyiis op(er)a omnia. 4to.
De Croy his conformity.
Chemnitius Harmony cum Lysono et Gerhard. 4o.

[1] The D.N.B. Article says the Library of "the Birmingham Grammar School"; but the MS. does not say so.

Clemens Alexandrinus o(per)a omnia.
Chrysostom's works in five folio.
Chytræus { de Historia. / de Traditionibus Apostol. folio.
Cowell's Interpreter.
Cyprian's op(er)a omnia. folio.

D.

Danaei { Op(er)a. folio. / In Symbolum Apostol. / Politica Christiana. / De prima mundi. / Isagoge Christiana.
Davenant n Coliossians. / de actuali Gratia, etc. / de morte C(hrist)i.
Diodate's Notes. folio.
Downe { de Antichristo. / de Justificatione. folio. / for Episcopacy.
Drexelii op(er)a omnia. folio 2 vol.
Dresier's Rhetoric.

E.

Espenca'i op(er)a omnia. folio.
Estius { in Epistolas Paulinas. / in Loca difficiliora. / in Sententias.
Eusebius History—ult edition.
Eusebius de praeparatione Evangelica. Graec. Lat.
Engagement Debates pro and con.
Erasmus { Adagio. Edit. ult. / et Volumen Quintum. folio.

F.

D. Featley Defence of Sr Hum. Lynd.
Ferns { in Pentateuch et Josh. / in Matthew, Johan, Romans. / How corrupted by Pap. Crashaw.
Forbes on Revelat.
Fulgentii op(er)a omnia.
Fulke { Against Rhemists. / Defence of or Translat. / His rejoinder.
Fox on Revelation. folio.
Ford on the Psalms. 4to. Latin.

G.

Gataker on Lotts.
Gerarde Loc. com. 3 vol. folio. Editio novissima.
Gelasii Philology. Edit. ult.
Grotius de Jure Belli.
Gyfford on Revelations.
Gee Divine Right of Magistracy.

H.

Bp. Hall's Works in two folios.
Hemingius on all the Epistles.
Herodian wth Paraeus notes.
Homer wth Spondanus coment.
Hornebock aganst Sociniains. 4to.
History of China folio.
Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity.
Hipperius Methodus concionandi.
Herodotus of the wickednes of the Popish Clergy.
Hospinian de orig. festorum et concordia Discor.
D. Homer for the Millenarists.
Horace wth a com. folio.
D. Holdsworth's Latin Lectures. folio. 17s.

J.

D. James his corruptions of the Fathers.
S. Jerom { in Psalmos, etc. / ad Laetam, etc.
Josephus his History.
Junii op(er)a omnia. 2 folios.
Illyricus clavis Scripturae.
Jndex Expurgatorius.
Justinian's Pandects.
Justyn Martyr's op(er)a omnia. Græc. et Lat.

K.

D. Kendall on p(er)s(ev)erance.
King James against { Vorstius et. / Card! Perron.

L.

Lactantius.
Laurentius on { Peter, James. 20s. / loci difficil. / et on Revelat. 1, 2, 3.
Lavater in { Joshua, Ruth, Chron., Ezra, etc. / Job. folio.
Lessius { cas(e) of conscience. / de Attributis.
Livy's History cū coment.
Lutheri op(er)a. 4 volum. 50s.
Lucan cū coment. folio.
Lucian's Dialog(ue)s in 4 vol. cū coment.
Lemnius de ocultis.

M.

Marevsius his Synopsis.
Mornay { against the Mass. folio. / The Mystery of Iniquity of the Church. / De veritate Christ. Relig.
Mendoza in 1 Regum. 2 vol folio.
B. Morton { Apology in 2 vol. / Grand Imposter. / Against Parsons. / De Potestate Regia.
Marshall cum aliis contra Anabapt.
Musculus in { Genesis. / Psalmos. / Isa. / Matth. / Johan. / Rom. et Corinth. / Galati(ans), Ephes., Coloss. / Thessal. et 1 Tim. / Loci com.
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